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(شماره١)

sense of competitions, which is one of the major outcomes of games, arises among learners and they participate in language learning activities.

Thrid, games remove the strictness and formality of language learning classrooms and allow students, as one side of this instructional transaction, to fill the information gap easily. Teacher is no longer the sole power in the classroom but a creative coordinator who knows what, why, how and when to comment on what is going on in classroom.

Fourth, to handle newly taught vocabulary items, as a are main part of language, games are productive and advantageous. Role playing, which is intrinsically a feature of language games, provides the students with natural setting within the walls of the classroom. The environments which may be experienced by the learners in their real life outside the classroom.

Fifth, playing games provide an opportunity for students to manipulate and make public what they have already learnt. In this instructional confrontation, those problematic areas of students are revealed. Deficiencies which may be in areas such as parts of speech, connotative and denotative meanings, and semantic features of vocabulary items can be overcome.

Sixth, in case some complicated ideas and concepts in teaching vocabularies cannot be put in words, teacher can resort to games to introduce them. This problem is intensified when teachers are handling elementary students for whom the routin procedures like definitions and examples do not work.

Seventh, language games provide the students with a sense of team activity. In this way, learners talk to each other to achieve a common goal. That is the time when

cooperative learning occurs in classrooms.

Finally, the results of this study may have some hints for English teachers, syllabus-designers, and materials developers who should pay some attention to language games.

English teachers ought to take games seriously and use them as teaching and reinforcing devices for presenting new vocabulary items in classrooms. Syllable-designers had better modify the traditional views on designing language learning curricula and allot a deserved part to language games. Materials developers should also reckon language games in compiling new textbooks for language learners.

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exam, the data were collected and then analyzed. The following table shows the values of means and standard deviations of both groups on the pre-test:

Group	N	ΣX	X^2	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Experimental	36	364	4814	10.1	5.69
Control	36	377	5251	10.4	6.10

Table 1
The comparative table of the means and S.D. of the groups on the pre-test

The means of two groups were compared through t-test

T-Critical	Two - tailed Hypothesis	d.f	T-observed
2.000	0.05	70	0.142

Table 2
Comparative table of t-observed and t - critical on the pre-test

After the pretest was administered, the treatment began with the experimental group. A session after the treatment was finished, the posttest was administered, and that following data were obtained:

Group	N	ΣX	X^2	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
Experimental	36	1010	30051	28.08	6.99
Control	36	756	17349	21	6.48

Table 3
A comparative table of the means and S.D. of both groups on the post-test

The results of the comparison between means scores of two groups through t- test are:

T-Ceitical	Two - tailed Hypothesis	d.f	T-observed
2.000	0.05	70	4.48

Table 4
Comparative table of t-observed and t - critical on the post-test

It is quantitatively revealed that t-observed is enough above t critical value. It means that the researcher can safely reject null hypothesis. Rejecting the null hypothesis at the .50 level indiciates that the differnece in means is as large as that found between the experimental and control group's and would not likely have resulted from sampling error in more than 5 out of 100 replications of the experiment.

What can be inferred from all these comparisons and calulations is that language games as reinforcing devices are influential in learning abstract terms. In other words, language games are useful devices in the hand of teachers to provide a lively atmosphere within classrooms while the degree of comprehensibility of students is fully kept.

Pedagogical Implications and Conclusions

Some of the practical impressions, which can be drawn from the results of the present study, are as following:

First, playing games makes students feel involved in classroom activites. They do not sit passively on their seat any more being attacked by mass of new information. They respond to the contents presented in classroom in a way that is proved, at least in this study, to be useful and understood.

Second, utilizing games after so many boring oral drills and energy draining activities revive the class and take the drudgery out of learning abstract concepts. Furthermore, a

book "English Today 5". These vocabulary items were arranged in alphabetical order as follows:

clue	hight	music	problem	stranger
conversation	holiday	news	request	subject
degree	hunt	noise	rest	surprise
difference	job	north	result	treasure
direction	kind	part	science	trick
dream	matter	pet	secret	visit
hate	measurement	piece	shape	walk
heat	memory	plenty	size	whistle

Morover, six language games were employed to mainpulate newly taught abstract vocabulary items. The researcher has attempted to pick up those which were geared to the level of the learners who undertook treament. These Language games were: Bingo, Definition Game, Dominoes, Word Scrambles, Paired Crosswords and TV Definition.

Procedure

To accomplish the purpose of this study, the following procedures were carried out:

Frist, as it was mentioned earlier a standardized Nelson Test was employed to almost homogenize learners regarding their proficiency in English. The scores which were too high and too low were discarded. Out of 95 learners who took the test, 70 subjects were selected. Then, they were randomly divided into two equal groups: experimental and control.

Second, the researcher scrutinized the book "English Today 5" and selected 40 words most of which were new. These words were all abstract in meaning, according to the definition by Richards et al. (1992).

Third, the vocabulary items were chosen and incorporated in a multiple choice vocabulary test designed by the researcher. Then the test was adminstered to a pilot group for its item analysis. After the most difficult and easiest items were discarded, the reliability and validity of the test were calculated. The reliability was obtain through Kudar-Richardson Formula.

Fourth, on the first day of the term, the subjects of both experimental and control groups took the vocabulary test developed by the researcher as pre- test.

Fifith, during the term, the teacher taught the vocabulary items to both experimental and control groups while teaching the book "English Todays". In Addition to this, the experimental group received the language games at the final minutes (15 to 20 minutes) as reinforcing devices. The researcher manipulated those language games which were proposed to stablilize the previously mentioned vocabulary items. The games were not used to teach the vocabulary items. Instead, they were used to strengthen and fix what has already been taught. Vocabulary items were taught through different traditional strategies like giving definition, introducing the words in context and providing students with examples.

Last, one week after the treatment was finished (the treatment lasted for 6 weeks), both groups took the same vocabulary test as post-test. Then, the data obtained from the groups were compared through T- test.

Analysis

Before the treatment, the pre-test was administered to the students. Having taken the

activity, one which ends naturally when some goal or outcome has been achieved". He has also added that "there are players who compete or cooperate to achieve that outcome, and there are rules which restrict or determine how the players can work towards their ends. Language games, as he said, is one in which language provides either the major content or the means through which the game is played.

Andrew wrigth, David Betteridge and Michael Buckby (1984) claimed that "to make this job [Language Learning] easy, language should be taught in a meaningful context" (P.1). The need for meaningfulness in language learning has been accepted for some years. Wright et al. (1984) added that the concept of meaningfulness "implies that the learners respond to the content in a way that proved to be understood." They concluded that "games can provide intense and meaningful practice of language" (P.1).

Another reason why language games are being offered for language learning is that they provide a classroom with joy and fun. Although some people exagerate to think that games are only fun and lack any pedagogical value, Jerry Steinberg (1983) believed that "after so many boring oral drills, or other energy-draining exercises, a quiet game is a fun way to relax" (P.ix). He claimed that whether or not you are a dynamic teacher, games can produce occasional general lapses in attention and has suggested that "a short, snappy game will raise attentiveness, revive the class, and make them more receptive to further learning" (P.X).

Smith (1972) in the introduction of his book has accounted language games for creating an exhilerating and lively setting in classrooms. He claims "sportmanship, competition and fun are parts of healthy human nature and these

are all that games contain" (P.1). He further added that the word "game" itself has a positive conception of recreation, happiness and joy in people's mind which makes them motivated when there are any."

Vossoughi and Clair (1994) took formality and strictness of language learning classroom into account and proposed that "psychologically speaking, games can remove those affective filters from the learner's mind and provide them with a practical motivation and the urgent need to utilize linguistic items" (P.14).

Vivian Cook (1991) has also underlined the role of motivation in successful learning and claimed that "high motivation is one factor that causes successful learning; successful learning, however, may cause high motivation" (P. 75).

Vossoughi & Clair (1994) also regarded the factor of game as a criteria for a rapid correction of stuednt's errors before being fossilized, otherwise, as they said, "It is an arduous job for students to be disposed of" (P.14).

Games also provide learners with a sense of team activity. According to Geoffrey Broughton et al. (1980) "Not only does group work give children more chance to talk to each other but it harnesses the purposeful and instrumental use of English" (P. 171).

Subjects

70 Iranian learners all of whom were male participated in this study. The samples were all students of fifth level in Sokhan English School in Tehran who had already passed 4 consecutive terms. Their average age was 13, ranging from 12 to 15.

Instrumentation

Forty abstract terms were selected from the

The Effect of Language Games As Reinforcing Devices on Learning Abstract Nouns

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Introduction

From a century ago when methodology as its modern sense came to existence, the question of procedure was one of the salient and controversial issues. Many scholars proposed various kinds of activites to stabilize the language within the classroom. These activities started from memorizing rules and vocabulary items in grammer-translation method and oral pattern drills in audiolingual approach and finally led to role playing and language games in communicative approach. As it is clear, language games are uesd in communicative approach and are is likely to be the last effort to consolidate the language being the taught.

A growing body of research has indicated that language games are influential tools in the hands of teachers in classrooms (Celce Muricia, 1979; Wright et al., 1983; Stern, 1983; Steinberg, 1983; Larsen Freeman, (1986). Much of the research in this area has been based on the theoretical views of communcative approach. According to this method, the goal of language learning is communicative compentence. Part of this communicative competence is related to knowledge of vocabulary. So, to improve learner's vocabulary, many techniques have been employed so far but some of these techniques, like giving definition or showing pictures, may be more efficient for concrete words, while in the case of abstract words they cannot properly work. The following essay is an attempt to underline how effective language games are of some help to one aspect of language learning, that is learning abstract nouns.

In order to do this research the following question and hypothesis were proposed.

Do language games, as reinforcing devices, affect learning abstract terms?

Language games, as reinforcing devices don't have any effect on learning abstract terms.

Language Games

The definition of a true game is rather strict. Shelagh Rixon (1986) defined game as "a close